

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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KESTELL OF GREYSTONE.

A SERIAL STORY.

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"*A Fair's Damzell*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII. LOVE'S PITFALLS.

ELVA passionately loved her home, and the moorlands about it; the charm of varying lights and shadows appealed, without her knowing it, to that which was awakening in her now that she had reached the happy stage in life when control was no longer exercised over her doings. She was like a newly-freed bird that flutters hither and thither, before it thinks of alighting on a twig, so that it may fully realise its liberty. Amice was free to do all the good works she liked. She could visit the poor, and teach in the schools. But Elva rejected all these restraints, in spite of Mr. Heaton's suggestions, and Miss Heaton's plain words that, "It was a great mistake when girls thought of nothing better than pleasing themselves when they came out."

"I hate poor people," was Elva's answer. "I do them no good; I don't know what to say to them. I would give them all the money I have rather than be expected to visit them. I get more good by sitting on the moor for an hour, looking at the lovely things there, than by going into pokey cottages."

Miss Heaton, who thought visiting the poor was the highest ambition and the highest work of woman, often shook her head over Elva Kestell's sine, and she would talk to her brother about them, little guessing that though he always said, "Yes, Clara," and "Exactly so, Clara," in his heart he admired the wilful strength of Miss Kestell's determination not to be

moulded into another Clara Heaton! Oh, those dreadful, deceiving beings called bachelor brothers! What do they not deserve? How bold they are to deceive their spinster sisters, and how cowardly, too, in the way they slink out of their stronghold when it is indefensible. Clara Heaton kept strict guard over her brother, being resolved that as he had not married before she came to keep house for him, he should not do so afterwards! He had passed the stage of fervour which had once made him think that a celibate body of clergy would be the highest blessing to England; now he was painfully conscious that Clara often reminded him indirectly of his past utterances, and he saw that she meant to keep him to his word.

Happily for Clara Heaton, Rushbrook Mills boasted of but few ladies. The lovely church in its wood of fir-trees, with its glorious outlook over vast expanses, was wife enough for any clergyman, thought the maiden sister; if Herbert did his duty to his church and his parish, that was enough object to last a man's lifetime. In her narrow way Miss Heaton was very determined; and, good and high-minded as he was, Herbert was a coward the moment his sister's neat bonnet, plain jacket, and unfashionable but useful skirts came within sight.

Miss Heaton had long ago reckoned up her enemies, and seen, or tried to see, where the greatest danger lay. There was the Honourable Betta up on the Beacon—no, there could be no danger from her—plain, shy, awkward, often required at home, and never saying much that was audible. There were one or two other young ladies who were living with aunts, or uncles, or widowed mothers. These were always in a state of adoring

the Vicar, and were useful for church decorations, and for making up a week-day congregation. To these, Miss Heaton was kind and patronising, encouraging them just enough to keep them up to the pitch of doing useful work, but knowing exactly where to stop, for fear lest their open admiration of Herbert should lead to anything in the least unsuitable, such as working slippers for him, or offering to make him a surplice. They might go as far as book-markers for the church, and surplices for the choir-boys; further, they must not go. But, as a matter of fact, Herbert, good, innocent man that he was, never guessed even that book-markers meant more than helps to find places; and that choir-boys' surplices hid hopeless love; he would have been truly shocked had he divined the joy of stitching for him.

Miss Heaton was now quite happy about these young ladies; but as she had heard often of the enormities committed by young vicars, she never ceased her watchfulness.

Then there were the "Kestell girls," as she called them, and stray visitors at Court Garden. She had not yet decided in her own mind which constituted her greatest point of danger, whether habitual sight, or sudden enchantment. It was this knotty question that kept her mind so frightfully busy. Would Herbert succumb to long knowledge engendering love, or would some pink and white beauty steal his heart? Neither of these terrible catastrophes must be allowed; but, oh! the watchfulness required, the planning, the little deceptions, the small subterfuges!

She finally settled that she had most to fear from Amice Kestell. Amice was good; and, but for her intense want of colour, very pretty; only she looked more like some beautiful marble statue, than real flesh and blood in the shape of a woman to fall in love with.

Still, Amice was constantly to be met with in cottages. She was loved by every man, woman, and child in Rushbrook Mills district, whilst Miss Heaton was feared. She was often, too, at church, though not with the regularity of the young ladies before-mentioned. Rather, she came like some angel, who, ruled by unknown laws, appears at uncertain intervals. On Amice, then, Miss Heaton concentrated her watchfulness, because she felt sure that Elva, who never went to a cottage, who thought chiefly of the things of earth, would never in the least attract her saintly brother Herbert.

Alas! for the genius of the cleverest of us when it comes to fathoming the opposite sex. When Clara so often remarked against the doings or the non-doings of that wayward Elva Kestell, Herbert always mentally found excuses for the fair sinner. He prided himself on understanding her, and on seeing all the good beneath the beautiful exterior. We must, of course, at once grant that to a man's mind there is much more likely to be unfathomed and hidden good in the heart of a beautiful woman than in that of a very plain one. In fact, quite unknown to himself, Herbert, from a certain charitable fairness in his character, was always finding excuses for Elva, whilst Amice, who needed none, and was never mentioned by Clara, came in for a lesser share of his thoughts. Indeed, he had an undefined feeling of strangeness and creepiness in her presence which in no way could lead to love.

Elva Kestell was like a new piano from the best maker—it wanted to be played upon to make sure of its tone, and till time and use had done their work, it was impossible to tell how much extraordinary worth it possessed.

Her nature had nothing artificial about it as yet; and surrounded apparently by every gift of fortune—health, wealth, and happiness—it seemed probable that she would sail happily with her rich freight into a pleasant harbour.

Such, dimly, were her own thoughts this lovely autumn afternoon, as, having taken her sketching things to her favourite stile, she had tried to express many things with her one brush, and had failed to make a picture at all resembling what she saw.

The afternoon was closing in. On the upland meadows spread out before her the cows were feeding as if this day were their last, for the shadows were lengthening and milking time was approaching. She had gazed at the distant forest land till she turned away impatiently, feeling that she could not take in the thoughts she dimly found there, and so looked towards the right, where she could catch line upon line of undulating country, pencilled out in milky blues and invisible greens, whilst here and there pale yellow patches showed where corn-fields or stubble-fields were announcing with their silent speech that man cannot live on beauty alone, but requires food also; in other words, that the needs of man's body have equal power as well as his spiritual necessities.

Elva threw her paint-brush on the grass,

and, hiding her face in her hands, listened. The wind was bearing her a message over the moors, and the wonderful voices of the trees which interpreted the wind were plainly audible.

"Miss Kestell!"

She started up as if the call had been supernatural, as if she were bound to follow, as if the moment had come when her vision would become clear and her life full of expected promise. Up till now she had been, so it seemed to her, all failure. She had tried to write, and her efforts had covered her with secret shame. She had tried to find a voice in music, in drawing, in the deep love she bore to her father and her sister; but she was still unsatisfied, and now, in the pause she had made to listen, she had heard a message of greater fullness, of greater possibilities; and when the voice, for the first moment unrecognised, so low was it, had called her, she was prepared to follow. She rose up in all her beauty of colouring and young womanhood to find only—yes, only—Walter Akister beside her!

The revulsion of feeling was so great that she said not a word.

As to Walter Akister, now that he had made her get up and could see her in all the loveliness of her happy youthfulness, he became mute. He could not tell her that he had seen her from a long way off; that he had followed her stealthily, like a Norway hunter follows the track of the wild deer, and that for a moment he had stood by her side unperceived, and had felt that if only he could tell her all he was experiencing, Elva, who had never shown him the least attention, must give in.

Good heavens! but how could she know? The moment she stood up and confronted him, Walter's fierce, brooding, bad-tempered nature reasserted itself strongly. He was again the shy, wayward man, whom neither men nor women ever thought of liking or making friends with. The irony of such natures is dreadful; the passion they have no power to express—and which it seems some evil demon turns to hatred almost as easily as to love—is often stronger than in more happy-minded beings. Happiness for such people is only a name; if given to them, the draught seems to turn to poison as it touches their lips; and this is no exaggerated language. Something—the riddle of which is too complicated to solve—ties them down, not only to their misery, but to the misery of others; and yet, let us

say at once, that Walter Akister, up till now, had been no man's enemy but his own. He seemed to be possessed of two natures, one full of passionate love and wish for enjoyment, and the other possessed of a strong determined force to frustrate the enjoyment of all pleasure and turn every cup of luscious wine into bitter vinegar.

For a few moments Walter had stood unseen by Elva, and had thought that if she would be his wife—let the probation be never so long—he would show her all that love and devotion could do for woman. He would teach her the depth of truest, noblest worship; but, suddenly, his other and stronger self asserted its presence. The evil cloud of doubt, of pride, of fancied wrongs, of perverse judgement, of obstinate imperviousness came down upon him, and he was dumb. As for Elva, when she had regained her power of speech, and with it a visible expression of impatience, she remarked:

"How you startled me, Mr. Akister! You might at least have—"

She did not know how to finish, and so sat down on the step at the foot of the stile, and began to collect her materials.

Her words were like so many daggers to poor Walter, as if in a vision you had been promised a sight of Heaven, and had, instead, been shown Dante's Inferno.

"I am very sorry," he stammered, leaning against the stile. "I ought, perhaps, to have let you know I was coming; but—"

He made a plunge, this being the most unwise thing he could do, when Elva, as he must have known, guessed nothing of his intentions.

"But what? I dislike being startled. I'm going home now; the shadows have all altered."

"But please don't go this minute; I want to say something to you."

Still, Elva guessed nothing; how could she, seeing that Walter Akister's manner was as cold and as surly as usual? He seemed to command her, even though his words were ordinary; and Elva disliked commands in any form.

"Then you can walk my way," said Elva, "or as far as I go," she added, thinking what a loss it would be if her lovely walk should be spoiled by the presence of that stupid, surly Walter Akister. "I think I shall find Amice down by the church; the evening service must be over."

This matter-of-fact way of viewing his

presence once more upset Walter's calculations, but he was driven to his ruin to-day by his evil genius.

"I came down to spend a few days at home on purpose to see you, so you might spare me a few minutes."

"To see me!" exclaimed Elva, in a tone of surprise, and just a little mollified—for what woman can resist, on being taken unawares, the charm of being specially singled out, even by the man she hates, or worse, by the one she despises?

"Yes, to see you. You never seem to guess how often I do come home for this reason. Do you fancy it is for my father, who hardly knows whether we are in the house, or not? or for Betta, who——"

"What are you saying?" gasped Elva, feeling the colour mounting to her cheeks, and looking at the long stretch of moorland before she could reach the valley. Then her eyes wandered towards the Vicarage chimneys that peeped up above the firs. This was the nearest house, and she would go there.

"Don't you understand me?" he said, growing more surly, because more hopeless. "That ever since I've lived here I've loved you, and now that you are going into the world you ought to know it, because—there, I must say it—it drives me mad to see you talking to other fellows. Look here, Elva, I've loved you always since I've known you, and always shall. I shall ask you again and again. You don't love any one else now, but you may meet some one who you may fancy loves you, and then——"

Elva was too much surprised and too angry to interrupt this speech sooner, now, however, she found breath to say, as she stood still and looked fearlessly at her strange lover:

"I don't know how you dare speak to me like this, Mr. Akister; I never knew you cared about me—I never even guessed it—and let me say, once for all, I shall never, never love you, and certainly I will never marry you. Pray let that end the subject. And now, please, let me go home alone."

Elva steadied her voice and looked like a Queen commanding a subject; but inwardly she was frightened by the strange, terrible look on Mr. Akister's face. She felt inclined to cry, for her romantic ideas had received a great shock. She had fancied love coming in the form of all that was beautiful and lovely; but in this shape it seemed altogether dreadful. However,

Elva was brave, and none of these feelings appeared on the surface.

Suddenly Walter Akister repented. He was angry with himself for having been so rude, so altogether different from his intentions. He could have knelt down at her feet at this moment and prayed for her forgiveness; he could have asked her to curse him if she could forgive him afterwards. But all this flow of repentance remained in his thoughts, because of his shyness and of his pride.

However, he was subdued and penitent enough, even outwardly, for Elva to see it. She breathed again more freely, and her limbs trembled less.

"Forgive me," he said, in a low voice, in which Elva could hear the tone of terrible dejection. "Forgive me! I was mad just now. But you don't understand what I feel, and what I mean. Will you forget my horrible rudeness, and remember only the cause?"

Elva's feelings were easily touched. Much of her charm was in that varying mood of manner and of expression of thought. She held out her hand, though without moving, for she meant to get rid of her lover.

He seized it for a moment, and then dropped it.

"If you mean nothing but forgiveness, I would rather not take it. Good-bye! You may forget all this, though I cannot. Remember, I shall never change. That night of the dinner-party at the Eagle Bennisons I found out that I must tell you. I couldn't bear to see that London fellow near you. I hated him."

Then, abruptly turning away, Walter Akister took the upward path towards the Beacon.

Elva continued her walk home in a new frame of mind. She saw nothing more of the beauty around her. She only knew that she was strangely moved, and very angry with Walter Akister except for his last words. Hoel Fenner suddenly appeared to her, when contrasted with Walter Akister, like a beautiful "preux chevalier." So clever, so courtly, so worthy of being admired. Strange that, in pleading his own cause, Walter had advanced that of the "London fellow." Half an hour later Elva tapped softly at her father's door.

CHAPTER VIII. PROUD OF HER NAME.

It was the day Mr. Kestell came home early from Greystone. He often did so

now, leaving much to his partner; but on Thursdays he was usually at Rushbrook by four o'clock. The first thing he always did on arriving was to go to his wife's sitting-room, which, as we have seen, was the most luxurious place in the house. By four o'clock Mrs. Kestell had got over the fatigue of getting up and eating her luncheon, and was at her best, looking forward to her afternoon tea, which was brought in when she made up her mind to ring for it. At this time Symee was in attendance, and reading to her mistress.

"The best was," as Mrs. Kestell often said, "that Symee, having been taught well, and having always lived with educated people, could read well, and never dropped her h's."

By this Mrs. Kestell meant it was best for herself, and not for Symee, because the invalid could not bear to hear an uneducated intonation; it jarred her nerves.

When Mr. Kestell entered, Symee always put a mark in her book, and left the room; and then might have been seen the most tender, lover-like behaviour on the part of the old man, who, having married for love, had never, even to himself, allowed how little pleasure he had derived from his marriage.

"Well, darling," he said to-day—and it was only a repetition, with variations, of many past days—"how do you feel now? Does this warm weather try you? What a glorious autumn we are having."

The kiss he imprinted on his wife's still unwrinkled forehead was gentle and loving as a woman's; and the action of putting on her shawl, which had a habit of slipping off—sharing its owner's want of strength of purpose—was touching in its unobtrusive thoughtfulness.

But Mrs. Kestell was accustomed to all these attentions, and took no special notice of them.

"Well, yes, the weather is very trying, Josiah. I thought of taking a short drive after lunch, but I could not make up my mind about it, and now it will soon be too chilly."

"Wouldn't a little turn in the garden be good for you, if you took my arm?"

"Oh dear no. You would walk too fast. You don't half understand all I suffer; men never do. No, you had better not trouble yourself about me."

The injured tone came into her voice. One might have fancied her husband had asked her to go up the Matterhorn.

"Very well, dear; do just as you fancy.

But really the air is delicious, and such a sky as there is this evening. I expect Elva is sketching. She seems to have taken to her drawing again lately. Your mother was a good artist. It would be odd if neither of the girls inherited it."

The mention of Lady Ovenden was, however, quite a mistake.

"Of course my mother had great advantages—the best masters and the best society—which my poor girls have never had. I believe it is that which makes Amice so quiet. She wants shaking up, and mixing with people—people of her own standing, I mean."

Mr. Kestell's face was troubled; there passed over his handsome, benign features a distinct look of pain.

"But what could we have done, dear? You know Elva never would go to school, or she could have been to the best; and Amice would not leave her sister, and then you have never been strong enough to take them about, and I could not leave you."

There was no shade of annoyance in his voice—only one of deep concern.

"I know all that, Josiah; but still it does seem strange that we, who are so much better off than the Fitzwilliams, cannot give our girls the advantages their cousins have."

"Shall we ask Mrs. Fitzwilliam to take the girls out next spring? I fancy that if we offered to pay for the house in town and all expenses, she would certainly not refuse!"

"I dare say not. Ellen never does make her ends meet, I feel sure; but I know what she would do: she would make her girls take the foremost position, and she is quite capable of making Elva and Amice play the rôle of poor cousins! That would never do. The best chances would be all for her plain daughters."

Mr. Kestell smiled a wintry smile, however. Money seemed to be able to do so little for him and his own people.

"Still, I fancy, Elva, at all events, wouldn't let herself be treated as a poor cousin! My little girl would make her mark anywhere."

"So would Amice," put in Mrs. Kestell, in an injured voice; though she was willing to find fault with her youngest daughter herself, she was jealous for her. "With her voice she would be asked out everywhere."

"If she would sing."

"How very unfair you are to Amice. You know she is not always in a mood for singing."

"Yes, of course; I meant no harm, dear. Now, speak about yourself. Would you like to have another opinion?"

"Dear me, no; that last London man did no good at all; those great men are so conceited. They come down with preconceived notions, and never listen to one's symptoms."

"I thought he took such pains."

"Just because he asked such a high fee! That is like a man, really, Josiah; after all these years you might know better. Pray ring the bell for my tea. I suppose you will wait for the girls."

"No, dear; if you like I will have a cup of tea with you."

"Oh, no, I like to be read to as I eat; I digest better. If you ring, Symee or Amice will come."

Soon after, Mr. Kestell was slowly pacing his own room, plunged in deep thought, which, if judged by the weary look on his face, could have been nothing very inspiriting. Every now and then he murmured:

"I did my best for her, my very best. I said she should want for nothing. I could not give her health—everything else. Good Heavens, everything else!"

It was out of this brown, perhaps black, study that he was aroused by a knock at his door.

His "Come in!" brought in Elva. Here, at all events, was the bright spot of his life; and his whole face brightened.

"Papa, are you busy?"

"Never too busy to see you, dear; and, in truth, just now I was doing nothing."

He went to his arm-chair and sat down by the fire, for, as his wife said, it was getting chilly, and the fire had just been lit. The daylight was merged into a golden sky; the autumn afternoon was ending in exquisite beauty. Elva flung off her hat, and put down her sketching-bag as she approached her father. It did his heart good to see her perfect confidence in him; there was not the slightest fear of him expressed in her actions, only a certainty of finding sympathy, which seemed to make the blood flow more freely in his veins; for, if not embittered by thoughts of the future, or the past, this mutual confidence between parent and child is one of the most divine feelings man can experience. He saw that Elva felt perfect trust in him, and that her great affection, which made her feel herself his equal, and also made her look up to him, was an absolute reality. He, too, was quick to catch the tones of her voice, and he added:

"What is it, darling? Something is the matter. Not another novel, is it? Never mind, there are ways and means of getting any book floated. Sinner told me that when I had my secret interview with him."

"No, no, papa; it is not that. I shall never write another novel. I mean, never one I shall want you to pay for. I see money is really of no use in such cases. Perhaps, after all, literature is the only real Republican thing in the world! We must stand or fall by the judgement of one's fellow-creatures; but——"

Elva felt shy and stopped short.

"What is it? No, not—love?"

The idea came suddenly, and seemed to send a dagger through him. He could not spare his Elva to another—the one joy of his life which had not disappointed him. Then, suddenly checking this spontaneous feeling, he thought only of his child's happiness.

"No, no; not love, but—oh, papa, don't tell any one. I can trust you. I know I can. You see, mamma is worried so easily. It's no use telling her; but you are never worried. You've always done everything for everybody. I do believe there is no one like you in all the world."

How her words warmed his poor heart; but he only gently pinched her ear.

"Foolish child, what a flow of words! But what is this great misfortune?"

"It isn't any misfortune; at least, I suppose not; but I felt so miserable, so frightened. Fancy my being frightened! But promise you won't tell."

"Word of honour." Then quickly he added: "But you can trust me, Elva, can't you, without protestation?"

"Of course. You're the most honourable man I know! You couldn't betray any one. Well, it's about Walter Akister. He—he made me an offer, and I felt as if I must tell somebody. Amice would be angry; but you—you will be just."

Mr. Kestell did not in the least realise the scene Elva had passed through, or he would not have taken her words so quietly. His sang-froid made her fancy she was silly to have been afraid, for Elva was not yet learned in love. It was her first offer.

"And you do not love him, child? Don't mind me; tell me the exact fact. I only want your happiness, Heaven knows! even though——"

He was careful of not giving his own opinion of young Akister before knowing if Elva loved him, and he paused.

"No, no, papa; I don't love him; I can't bear him. He is so strange, so rough, so— No, no, there's nothing in him that I like; but—I am sorry for him."

Mr. Kestell breathed more freely.

"Don't be in a hurry, dear. Remember his family is all that can be desired. He has rank and wealth. I know Lord Cartmel is rich—richer than if he had large estates; and though his hobby, of course, is very expensive, yet he is very just; he will not injure his children."

The hand that held Elva's trembled a little. She knew not why; and hardly noticed it.

"Papa, that is like you to be so good. I knew you would understand; but what do I care about rank and wealth? You always say we shall have enough. We are rich, aren't we?"

"Rich," said Mr. Kestell, quietly, in a low voice, as if half to himself, "there are so many ways of understanding that word; but anyhow, child, you need not marry for money. I hope I have prevented that; on the other hand, remember that Walter Akister cannot possibly love you for your money, there is no need of that. Only for yourself, my child."

"For myself!" said Elva, rising and standing in the half-firelight, half-reflected cloudlight. "Yes, I see that is a great thing; but, papa, I want to love, too. I know that I could love, only he must be more perfect than you are to make me love him better; and I never, never could love Walter Akister. Oh! papa; just think, who could?"

"I never, never could love Walter Akister." These words sank deeply into Mr. Kestell's mind. Why, he hardly knew, as they were most natural, considering the subject of them!

"And you are quite sure your mind is made up? What do you want me to do?"

"That is what I wanted to speak to you about. Perhaps it isn't very generous of me to tell you all this; if I hadn't wanted very badly to tell somebody, I would have kept it to myself, for Walter's sake; but it is safe with you. You must appear not to know it, papa. Don't mention it to any one, not even to mamma, if you don't mind very much, because—"

"Your mother has a right to know, Elva."

"She might think that—oh, you know mamma believes in the aristocratic people she came from. Our family, papa, wasn't

so aristocratic; but just as good and noble, for all that! I'm proud of being a commoner; you believe me, don't you? I wouldn't be a lord's daughter for anything. One is more free, and then one can hold one's head just as high!"

The girl knelt down beside her father and put her arms round his neck, and laid her soft cheek against his furrowed face.

"Dear, dear papa, keep my secret, and you do believe me, don't you, when I say I would much rather be Kestell of Grey-stone's daughter than Lady Cartmel?"

Sometimes out of the mouth of babes come very sharp swords.

SOME SARDE SKETCHES.

MY readers may surely be excused if they know nothing, at present, about the island of San Antioco. Were a man to travel through the world, visiting a fresh island every day of his life, from the time he is weaned, I suppose he would, even on an average estimate of longevity, die ere he had seen more than a tithe of the insular estates of our little sphere. Besides, San Antioco is too trivial to be noticed by any save the most generous of geography manuals. So that the youthful intelligence which could and would acquire a casual knowledge of a hundred islands in a day might, at the end of a year, throw its books into a corner, and declaim against the futility of all effort, because it was unable to capitulate the length and breadth, natural products, and population of this particular island.

San Antioco is a pear-shaped island on the south-west of Sardinia, and about thirty-seven miles in circumference. Inasmuch as one may go to it dryshod, perhaps its claim to be an island may be disputed. In truth, however, the bridge which carries the high road from Sardinia to the island town does actually cross a current of sea-water, which, however shallow, suffices to insulate San Antioco.

I left Cagliari—Sardinia's capital—for this little island on the day of Corpus Cristi. One gets so used to festivals of one kind or another in Sardinia, that even Corpus Cristi did not keep me from the fulfilment of my plans.

By May it is warm in Sardinia. Here, as in Italy at that time, the ordinary civility of a railway-car, or a diligence, demands constant iteration of the phrase: "It begins now to grow warm!" If a

Southerner makes this admission, one may believe that it is really warm. In truth, the broad meadows west of Cagliari—level as a billiard-table—had changed from green to russet colour; and the spacious salt-marshes and ponds of the "campidano" glowed with a hot reflection against the cloudless sky. The mountains in the distance, whither we were going on our way to San Antioco, stood clear to the highest point.

There is nothing of absorbing interest to see in the vicinity of Cagliari. These great flats serve as breeding grounds for beasts and horses now, as in the time of the Romans; and now, as then, they breed plenty of fevers also.

After running through these hedgeless meadows for about an hour, we came to a village called Siliqua. The village is out of the way; but a bold castle on a rock, rising nearly nine hundred feet from the plain, catches the eye instead of it. The castle is that of Acquafredda (or, in English, cold-water castle). Of course it is a ruin in the nineteenth century. But it has had a very solid part in the drama of old Sardinia. One of its masters was the unfortunate Ugolino, the patrician of Pisa who incurred the enmity of his native republic, and especially of the Archbishop of Pisa, the infamous Ruggieri. Would you know more of this Ugolino, read the thirty-third canto of Dante's "Inferno." For he it was whom Dante found in the ninth compartment of Hades, with his teeth fastened in the nape of the neck of a companion. This companion, too, was none other than Ruggieri, the Archbishop, who starved to death, in a Pisan tower, Ugolino and his two young sons.

You must know that I was the Count Ugolino,
And this the Archbishop Ruggieri.

However, we have no time to spend at Siliqua, and this must suffice as a sample of its historical associations.

An hour more, and, having by this time entered the lower reaches of the mountains of Iglesias, we glide gently into the city of Iglesias. What a winsome place it is, under the warm, yellow light of the May evening! The mountains fall close to it, in rocky knolls clad with trees and herbs. One hill, which almost impends over the town, shows the ruins of the castle whence, five hundred years ago, the Arragonese overawed the city at its feet, when they had got possession of this, the first of their landed properties in Sardinia. The nightingales were singing betimes among the

orange groves, as I walked up the street of white houses in quest of a bed for the night.

Iglesias is known, more or less intimately, to all mineralogists who have sought to turn their learning to practical account. The mountains around it teem with lead. Zinc is also plentiful, and the Romans, who carried shiploads of silver hence, have left not a little precious metal in the very ashes by which they separated the ore from the dross. Lead is the chief mineral product of Iglesias nowadays. In their search for silver, the Romans neglected the lead. They even left it in massy columns and ledges, isolated from the argentiferous matrix which they had removed. They seem, therefore, to have had no use for it. And the modern miners have profited prodigiously, both by their earlier labours and their considerate contempt for the baser metal. About a score of years ago, zinc was discovered in Iglesias. The excitement in the city was, thereupon, very great. Speculative foreigners from all parts of the Continent came hither; and a traveller, arriving by chance in the place, records that he heard no fewer than eight different languages at the supper-table of his inn.

The peasants round Iglesias all thought their fortunes were assured by this new mineral. Hundreds of concessions for rights to mine under their fields and vineyards were applied for in a year, and even granted.

Well, of course there was a relapse after a time. It is said that the chief sufferers were English. Our honest countrymen found the Sardes much sharper than they were fancied to be. The climate was another terrible trial. It was impossible to work during the summer without risking a fever of the most deadly kind. Thus, year by year, the English interest in Iglesias has lessened. At present it hardly exists. The engineers are mainly Italian; and the workers Sardes.

This little digression may explain the number of grimy and sallow men, clad in rags of a cosmopolitan kind, whom one meets in Iglesias. The mines are a few miles from the city; but many of the operatives live in Iglesias.

When I had ordered my dinner and a bed at the "Golden Lion," I went forth into the streets of the place. Though I had missed the processions of Cagliari, I was not to lose those of Iglesias. Following a crowd of dames in gala dress, I

reached the Cathedral Square in time to join those already in the church awaiting the return of the priests and effigies, after their pompous perambulation of the city. Sardinia is very retentive in the matter of its costumes. The men in the country districts wear the same attire that their grandsires to the twentieth generation also wore. With the women it is their jewellery, and sundry more gorgeous personal garments—such as a bodice of gold or silver lace embroidered upon satin—which descend in like manner from mother to daughter. Iglesias is, perhaps, less famous than the “campidano” of Cagliari for the wealth of its ladies. Here, however, were no few dames of a picturesque and valuable kind. Their heads were draped with long silk kerchiefs, generally light-blue in colour, to their waists. The richer wore also a small scarlet skull-cap under the kerchief. The dresses were for the most part of vivid primary colours—silk, satin, or cotton, according to the opulence of the wearer. Gold ornaments were displayed wherever they would perch. Bracelets, brooches, ear-rings, necklets, with innumerable bangles hanging therefrom—these were, of course, the commoner kind of decoration. The poorest of the women, instead of a head attire of silk, wore blue flannel.

Imagine, then, the brilliant scene, viewed from the interior of the church—sufficiently filled already—when the ecclesiastics, with their banners and guilds, and a swaying mob of attendant peasants and others, the heads of the women blue, crimson, yellow, and white, presented themselves at the door, and prepared to march up towards the altar.

Of the guilds with the clergy I will only mention two or three companies. What think you of a troop of little boys in surplices, each carrying a white artificial Annunciata lily, and all marshalled in the train of one little girl, dressed like a bride, before whom a silken banner is carried? The damsel—a pretty, conceited little soul—plays the part of the Virgin, of course. As for the boys, they play many parts, whether designedly or not. The two leaders tickle the ears of the child-bride in front of them with their Annunciata lilies. The others tickle each other in the same way. Thus, all the way up to the altar, there is constant recrimination. The symbolical Virgin turns round with a look of childish anger, while she rubs her ear; and no sooner has she raised her little

head aloft again, and reassumed the look of sanctified innocence which so entrances the simple country-folk, than the lily once more tickles her, and puts all her resolution to flight. The boys, too, war with each other, using their lilies as quarterstaves, until they are cuffed into order by the troop in the rear.

This troop is very vivid for colour. It is composed of about a dozen men in scarlet gowns, carrying lamps in their hands. The lamps have long handles, and are therefore admirably fitted for applying to the heads of the turbulent boys in front.

After the red men are men in gowns of white and black, carrying staves only. Older girls in white follow these men. Another company of boys, without lilies, in attendance upon a maiden of mature age, seem to symbolise the Virgin at a later period of her life. The Bishop of Iglesias, in crimson silk, canons in violet, and other dignitaries of humbler rank are the nucleus of this very engrossing spectacle. And when as many of the processionists have been crammed into the building as the size of the building will admit, the concluding part of the Corpus Cristi function takes place. What with the heat, the crush, the iniquitous behaviour of her lily-bearing cortège, and her futile attempts to comport herself with suitable dignity and sweetness of demeanour, the little girl whom I have already mentioned is reduced to such a state of distress that, before the end of the ceremony, she falls into tears, and disregards all her responsibilities. But, in fact, the exit from the cathedral is a mere scrimmage, so that her sorrow passes unremarked.

In the evening I strolled through the city again, to see if it continued to merit the stigma for drunkenness which of old it bore. Of beer-drinking there was little; but almost every other house in its narrow ill-smelling streets was arranged with portly wine-barrels and counters. Here in a gloom chastened rather than dispelled by a swinging lamp or two, were parties of peasants dining and card-playing with great gusto. But the cafés were still better attended; and in honour of the day a harpist twanged his melodious wires among the guests and confectionery of the principal of these resorts, while the fair ladies of Iglesias paraded to and fro in the cool between the cathedral and the palazzo of the Mayor. The only other form of dissipation that confronted me

here was a paltry booth in the new square of the city. "The Beautiful American Lady" was advertised as the inmate of the booth, and as a marvel to challenge the world for her charms and strength.

The next morning, at eight o'clock, I took my seat in the diligence for San Antioco. The distance between the two places is about thirty kilometres; the fare, two francs. I mention the fare to show that diligence travelling in Sardinia is cheap. In this instance it was cheaper than usual, because, as my driver said with a sigh, he had a rival. Though he carried the royal mails, he was not to have the monopoly of passengers. A buff vehicle started five minutes before we started; and the sight of the buff coach, picking up travellers who ought to have waited for the mail, was enough to make any honest mailman grind his teeth.

The first ten miles of our journey was through a series of mountain gorges, the cliffs on either side of us showing innumerable galleries in which the miners were at work. The common signs of a mining country were also not wanting: precise banks of refuse from the borings; discoloured brooks; slouching workmen smoking the inevitable pipe; ruined or deserted hovels by the wayside. But here, all these indications of disturbance could not deprive the land of its beauty. The screes, a thousand feet higher than our heads, fell none the less precipitously for the burrows within them. Nor were all the olives and fig-trees, which at one time grew thick upon them, cut down or withered by the tainted atmosphere.

Ere arriving at San Antioco—which is visible across the plain of Sulcis and the intervening arm of the sea long before we reach it—I must really say a bad word for the blue and yellow diligence in which I was so unfortunate as to travel. Pretensions to comfort, it had absolutely none. It was of wood wholly. I believe its springs, if it had any, were wooden. Its cushions were certainly of wood, for it had none but the boards; and its dimensions were so small that a man of long legs and arms, and, therefore, with a high head, found himself perplexed how to stow his obtrusive body. One has, indeed, to travel in such a vehicle as if one were but half in it. By leaning with arms and shoulders out of the window, a certain compromise is effected; but, in time, the attitude gets fatiguing. And if there is any dust, it is but an exchange of one infliction for another.

Before entering San Antioco we skirted the sea where it throbs, lazily and shallow, upon the sandy shore of Sardinia, facing the island town. The plain of Sulcis is to the south of us: a flat area, parched already, with much poor barley on it, and many acres of marsh fast drying under the warming sun, and thereby extending the margin of dark consolidating ooze, which only too well suggests its malarious capabilities. This plain is about twenty miles long, by five or six broad. Two or three starveling villages are all the population it supports. The Saracens ravaged the district so effectually that, for centuries, it has been thus forsaken. Two or three prostrate granite columns—one column erect, but half-buried in the mire—and the solid remains of the old Roman road by the water-side are all the emphatic signs of the early inhabitants of Sulcis in Sardinia. San Antioco, itself, claims to be Sulcis proper; and, indeed, the architectural débris of the place bear out its claim.

The island has but two small towns: San Antioco, on the east coast, and Calasetta, to the north, facing the island of San Pietro. It is rocky throughout, though its highest point is barely nine hundred feet above the sea level. Where there is enough soil for the purpose, vineyards are formed; but the wine of the island is harsh, and not to be compared with the better wines of Sardinia. For the most part, the island hills are covered thick with juniper, lentisk, wild thyme, and cistus. Upon this brushwood the poor children of the town depend for their livelihood. They spend many hours of the day out on the hill-sides, garnering the wiry woodstuff for sale in the town. And sweet, indeed, is the odour of the San Antioco smoke from domestic hearths fed with such savoury fuel.

There is no inn in San Antioco. My reader may as well be informed of this. If I had space, how I could enlarge upon this fascinating theme; to wit, the pleasant hardships one has to suffer in the search and enjoyment of unprofessional hospitality. Here, however, a large lady received me into her house with a certain amount of amiable patronage. She made me much at home, gossiped with me as if I had known her from my infancy, told me about the Vicario's colic, the Lieutenant N——'s social gallantries, and her own relations' peccadilloes, prattled endlessly, in short; but gave me little to eat;

and in the morning, with an air of ingenuous indifference, asked me to pay her a goodly sum. Then she genially shook me by the hand, wished me a "good journey," a "speedy return," and we parted.

But, in the meantime, I had at least a glimpse of life in San Antioco. There is a fountain by its beach, round which the lasses of the place, in gay attire, love to gather. Some wash clothes in its trough; others go thither with empty pitchers, and return bearing its water. But one and all are sturdy little pedestrians, and inimitable chatters. By the fountain are Roman marbles of one kind and another; bits of temples and domestic dwellings. And within the latter-day houses of the little town are coins, pottery, scarabæi, and intaglios; spoil which the past daily renders up to the present.

Of all the wonders of the place, nothing is held to be more wonderful than its street of tombs. Tombs they were, really, more than two thousand years ago. The tufa of the hills has fallen into a series of natural grottoes, in which the Carthaginians of the first Sulcis laid their dead. Nowadays the dead are displaced; their treasures of gold and precious stones scattered among the museums, and their bones spread broadcast about the fields; and in their stead entire families occupy their sepulchres. The niches and coigns which held their bodies serve for pots and pans, the meal-sack, or the fodder which is to sustain the ass that grinds the corn, also within the inhabited tomb.

There is another of these grottoes under the Church of San Antioco, with extensive ramifications. Here, with lighted candles, we prowled for half an hour, among piles of skulls and other bones set in the corners, and over undisturbed tombs of bricked arches. In this very romantic hole, one sees the vault anciently occupied by San Antioco. It is furnished with a little iron grill; but, within, one sees nothing. For, early in the seventeenth century, the remains of the saint—by whom, or for what canonised, I cannot say—were transported to Iglesias for security. Since that time, and up to the year 1851, there was an annual carrying of the body to and fro between Iglesias and San Antioco on the festa of San Antioco. The junketing on these occasions was fabulous, and also the attendance. It was the custom to make the journey in two days. All the priests and people, and the effigies, and the skull

of the saint in a silver casket, halted half-way for the night in a pleasant al fresco camp. On the third day, they returned to Iglesias, and the skull was enshrined on the altar.

In 1851, however, the people of San Antioco began to assert what they, fairly enough, conceived to be their rights. The saint was theirs. Why, then, should it return to Iglesias, whither it had been carried two and a half centuries ago, merely because the pirates, who then ravaged the land, might else have run off with it? Accordingly, they rose in arms, and opposed the procession when it reformed for the return march. The riot had to be suppressed by the Government. A lawsuit supervened, and this eventuated in the final repose of the relics of San Antioco in the church which was his first resting-place. "Tanti miracoli!" (numerous miracles) observed the sacristan of the church, in comment upon the efficacy of the saint. Surely the attempt of Iglesias to retain possession of the body was in no way different to the refusal of a pickpocket to surrender a watch to the person whom he may have relieved of it.

The evening in San Antioco was tranquil and restful. With my entertainer's sanction, I sat on her doorstep, and watched the ebb and flow of life in the little square, while the glow of sunset glided over white houses, hill tops, and the sea. There had been a killing of tunny fish near the island that morning, and they were cutting up a fish or two in one corner of the square. Now and then a citizen came by, and passed me a civil word or two. A stranger is not common in San Antioco; but no one treated me as a novelty. One old gentleman dallied a little, while prating of the good features of his native town. When I asked him if it were healthy, he called the devil to witness that there was no place in the world to equal it. A centenarian was no luxury in the village. He himself had a relation whose years numbered one hundred and ten.

After this gossip came pleasanter sport. My hostess had a great-niece who was wont, it appeared, to come to her house to amuse herself with broidery work of the old style. She was a fine, dark girl, with merry white teeth, and no shyness. And so, for half an hour, while the light waned to gloom, her nimble fingers went to and fro on the frame between which her work was stretched, and she purled forth speech as continuously as the flow of

a brook. She was weaving her bridal veil—nothing less. It was the custom for girls thus to employ themselves, whether or not they had certain prospect of playing the bride. And methought it a gracious and wise custom too. For the maid who is married in thought—as the weaver cannot but be—is assuredly only less married than she who is led to the altar. She has run up the gamut of expectation, and enjoyed the sweets of hope.

I asked the maid when her time would come.

"Who knows, sir," said she, "if it will ever come?"

Thus, you see, she had learnt some philosophy, and that I attribute to the broidery frame.

When it was quite dark, and the piazza was inhabited by voices alone, sundry enterprising citizens, with antiquarian trifles to sell, sent their daughters to offer them to me. What shrewdness such conduct implied! Among the treasures were rings of various kinds, set with Egyptian and Roman stones. Of course the rings had to be upon some one's finger to show themselves to advantage. And you may be sure the damsel who brought the antiquity had a finger to spare for the task. This went on for an hour, until my hostess grew cynical, and commented upon her fellow townsfolk and their craft.

"Jewels," she said, "were like faces. They should be appraised in the day-time."

And so, with masterful tact, she cleared the house; told me the moon was rising on the other side, and put the candle in my hands. This ended the day in San Antiocho.

THE VIKINGS' GRAVES.

VERY quietly they sleep,
Where the cliffs stand, grim and steep;
Where the shadows, long and cool,
From the side of great Berule,
Sweeping from the changing sky,
As the silent days go by,
Touch at last the ceaseless waves,
Thundering 'neath the Vikings' graves.

Fitting requiem do they make,
As they gather, roll, and break,
For the warrior-kings of Man,
Who, as only Ilesmen can,
Loved the glory and the glee
Of the ever-changing sea;
Drew from her their stormy breath,
Sought her for the calm of death.

Very quietly they rest,
With the green turf on their breast;
Mace, and blade, and mighty shield,
Arms that they alone could wield,

Notched and browned by blow and rust,
Lying silent by their dust,
Who, in the sweet sunny Isle,
Held their own by them erewhile.

Chance and change have swept away
Relics of the elder day.
Like the tiny "Church of Treen,"
Ruins tell of what has been;
Times of prayer and praise devout,
Times of furious fray and rout,
Times of royal pageantry,
Passed away—and here they lie.

Solemnly, to quiet graves,
Rowed across the subject waves
To their last homes Vikings came,
With songs of triumph and acclaim;
Then Berule looked grimly down
On hero dead, on forfeit crown,
On chanting monk, and sail, and prow,
Even as he watches now.

"Peace," says the stranger as he stands,
Gazing o'er the golden sands,
Where, with endless crash and shock,
Breakers surge round Niarbyl Rock;
Where the sea-mews sweep and cry;
Where Fleshwick towers to the sky;
Where Bradda rears his giant head;
"Peace be with the Mighty Dead."

A GOSSIP ABOUT BIBLES.

WE modern English care more for the Bible than do the people of any other country. British and Foreign Bible Society, Trinitarian ditto, Christian Knowledge Society—at least a dozen of them—printing and dispersing Bibles in various languages under cost price. It is our fetish; and the African chief in the well-known print, to whom the Queen is handing a copy of "the Book," looks as if he thought so. Unless he is altogether different from other African chiefs, he will wrap the precious volume up, first in red cloth and then in palm leaves, and tie it round with a bit of gold lace, only to be brought out and opened on the solemn occasions on which, in earlier days, the witch doctor would have been sent for.

Walk down a long street of small houses in the suburb of any thriving town. You can see into the front parlours, and every one is alike in possessing a small table, close to the window, covered with an "antimacassar," and on this a big Bible. Nobody ever reads it; there are others for general use. But the possession of the big book adds a sense, not of respectability only but of security to the household. It holds the place the Penates did in a Roman house.

Of old it was not so. For hundreds of years we were almost alone among European nations in having no translation of

the Bible. We have had the Psalms for nearly twelve hundred years—since Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, translated them. Not long after him "the venerable Bede," "for the advantage of the Church," turned into English St. John's Gospel. He died, says the story, just as he was finishing the last chapter, in writing which he had been helped by a light miraculously streaming from his left hand.

King Ælfred, about A.D. 890, translated the part of Exodus containing the Ten Commandments; but not till sixty years later did Aldred, priest of Holy Island, English the other three Gospels. Thence, down to Wyclif's time, paraphrases were more popular than versions. Ælfric, Archbishop of York, A.D. 1000, instead of translating the Pentateuch, with Joshua and Judges, took the wiser course of summarising, in his own language, "what concerning the history of the Jews it is most important for Christian men to know." He wrote, in fact, a "Bible History."

Richard Rolle, of Hampole, A.D. 1349, turned the Psalms into English prose, and added a commentary, of which this is a sample. The words in Psalm ciii. 5, "So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's," he renders: "Newed soul be als of acren thi youthed." The gloss being, "The arne (eagle) when he is growd with grete elde, his web waxis so greteley that he may nogt open his mouth and take mete; but then he smytes his web to the stane, and has away the slogh, and then he goes til mete, and he commes yong agayne."

This is much moderner than Ælfric's, in which Eve's reception by Adam is thus recorded: "Tha cwaedh (said) Adam: Heo is ban of minum banum and flaese of minnem flaesce. Beo hire name Virago, that is faemne."

England was too busy under her earlier Plantagenet Kings to care for doctrinal theology. She left that to Bohemians, and such like, while she was annexing Wales and Ireland, arranging a *modus vivendi* with Scotland, and keeping her hold on nearly half France. John of Gaunt was the first to cry out for an English Bible. "We will not be the dregs of all," he cried, when some churchman was questioning the good of Wyclif's work, "seeing other nations have the law of God, which is the law of our faith, written in their tongue." Wyclif's prologue puts it on the same ground: "Frenchmen, Beemers

(Bohemians), and Britons (Bretons), have the Bible translated in hire modir tongue. Whi shouliden not Englishmen have the same in hire modir language, I can not wite." The wonder is how rapidly Wyclif's book was multiplied. He and Nicholas of Hereford put forth their version in 1380. Eight years after Purvey published a revised edition. They say that over a hundred and seventy copies—of course manuscripts—have survived to this day. Purvey, "the symple creature," as he calls himself, aimed at simplicity. The Psalms in Wyclif's Bible—Hereford's work—are in grand, sonorous English. Thus Psalm ciii. 7 runs: "Knowen he made his weies unto Moises, and to the sones of Jacob his willis. . . . Aftir our synnes he did not to us. . . ." Purvey spoils this for modern ears by transposing: "He made his weies knowun to Moises; his willes to the sones of Israel. . . . He dide not to us aftir our synnes. . . ." Neither of them proposed to go further than the Vulgate. "Out of Latyn into English," says Purvey, "this symple creature hadde myche trauaile, with diverse gode felewis and kunnynges helperis, togedere manie elde biblis, and to make as Latyn bible sumdel trewe." Four times, he says, he went over it, consulting with grammarians and divines, and the last time shaping the sentences so as they should by simple men be understood. Men are in general most eager after what is forbidden them; and the clergy took the very way of making the Scriptures popular. Wyclif was more than ever persecuted, though he died in his living of Lutterworth; and not till forty years after his death was he dug up and burned, and his ashes thrown into the stream close by his churchyard. Hereford was excommunicated, and had to renounce Lollardism in order to get out of prison. Purvey, too, was frightened into recantation; and in 1414 a law was passed that all who read the Bible in English should forfeit "land, catel, lif, and goods, from ther heyres for ever." The anger of the clergy was not against the Bible, but against the Lollardism which was professed by its translators. Of course, if you deny the right of private judgement, it is no use giving a man a translated Bible; and, if he be free to judge, he is sure in many cases to run into what ecclesiastics call heresy. The true way would have been for the Church to have given an authorised version. Instead of this they found fault with Wyclif's. Sir T. More, though writing

a hundred and fifty years later, gives the feeling of Wyclif's own time: "The great arch-heretic did purposely in his translation corrupt the holy text, maliciously planting therein such words as might, in the reader's ears, serve to proof of the heresies he went about to sow."

Wyclif's version, as compared with Purvey's, is notable for the abundant use—more Greek than English—of the participles. This Purvey specially disowns: "A participle may be resolved into a verb of the same tens, and a conjunction copulatif;" and thus Wyclif's Acts xxi. 5, "And, the days fulfilled, we goinge forth wenten alle men ledinge forth us til to withoute the citee; and, the knees putt in in the see brynke, we preiden," becomes in Purvey: "And when the dayis weren filled, we zedin forth, and alle men ledden forth us withouten the citee, and we kneliden down in the sea brinke and preiden." And again of Balaam, Wyclif's Numbers, xxiv. 1: "And, the spirit of God fallynge into hym, takun to a parable, he seith," becomes, "And whanne the spirit of God felle on hym, whanne a parable was taken, he saide;" which last shows that Purvey went out of his way to substitute for terse English a clumsy roundabout, which he had got into his head was grammatically simpler.

Of course, both Wyclif and Purvey have old forms—been for bees, izen for eyes, etc. Here is a set of old verb-forms: "And the people that wenten before and that souden (followed) crieden and saiden Osanna," etc. "Thilke gilour" (this deceiver), "the flum Jordan" (river), "therf" (unleavened), "cacchepollis" (sergeants), "sour dough" (leaven), "itchons" (hedgehogs, Psalm civ. 18), "soler" (upper room), "yrene" (spider), "unbileful" (incredible), are among the obsolete words. As is "dod-died" (cut), of Absalom's hair—"the more that he doddied the haris, so much the more thei wexen;" "raskeyl" (rocaille, common people), "wonyng" (habitation), "stithie" (anvil), "sparlyous" (calves of legs), "sad" (stronger sure), "catel" (goods), "coffin" (basket). Sorcerers are "deuil-clepers," and "buffer" is a stammerer—"the tunge of bufferes swiftli shall speke." These are tersely put: "Whanne he nyzed (drew near to) the citee;" and, "Eche that enhauncith hym schal be lowed, and he that meketh hym (makes himself meek) shall be hizid" (exalted). "Soul-hauers" are living things. One remembers that old tract headed "The Ayen-

bite of Inwit" (the remorse of conscience); in Wyclif, "azen" (again) gives many such compounds; thus "azenstood" (resisted), "azenbier" (redeemer), "azenscie" (gainsay).

Though his translation was dubbed heretical, Wyclif does not weed out church terms, as did James the First's translators. He uses "the clergie" for "God's heritage" (1 Peter, v. 3), and priests where the Authorised Version has elders. Church in our version is limited to a Christian congregation; Wyclif uses it of any gathering; "the chirche of yuele (evil) men," and "it may be assilid in a lawful chirche" (Acts xix. 39). So, again, as he did not go beyond the Vulgate, he naturally uses "sacrament" where the Greek word is "mystery." "Great is the mystery of godliness," rather gains in clearness by being rendered, "It is gret sacrament of pitie" (piety). And—as if he held the Romanist view of marriage, of the man leaving father and mother, and cleaving to his wife—"this sacrament is gret." So John Baptist cries—just as he does in the Douay Bible—"Do ye penance;" and "repentance unto life" is "penance to leif." Some of his renderings are so terse, that one wonders why they were changed. "Passe we over the sea," is better, surely, than "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." "Brother Tite," and "Luk the leche," provoke a smile; but "the beloved Persis" is a poor exchange for "Persida moost deveouth the womman."

The Vulgate has of late gained credit. Scholars have found that Saint Jerome's manuscripts were much "better"—as they naturally would be—than those used by our translators. The Greek manuscripts which have in quite recent times been unearthed, in the Vatican, in Mount Athos monasteries, and other places, are found to agree in many parts with those which Jerome used. Hence, in several things, Wyclif's version, following the Vulgate, agrees with our "Revised," in omitting the doxology after the Lord's Prayer, for instance.

When Wyclif makes our Lord answer John Baptist's question, "And pore men taken to prechyng of the Gospel" (to the poor the Gospel is preached), one cannot help thinking that the translator was straining a point in support of his own plea of sending out poor men as preachers. Here are two more places in which Wyclif and the Revised agree. Job iii. 8: "rayse Leuyathan;" and Job xxxvii. 22: "Gold shall come fro the north," says Wyclif; "Golden splendour," say the Revisers;

"Fair weather," being the Authorised rendering. Proverbs xix. 18: "Sette not thy soule to the sleying of hym;" Revised, "His destruction;" where the Authorised has: "Let not thy soul spare for his crying."

And again, in Proverbs xi. 12, both Wyclif and the Revised invert the Authorised order, and give: "He that despiseth his friend is void of wisdom." Quaintness is sometimes delightful; for example: "Derlynges of God and clepid holy," Romans i. 7; but "biholde the crowis," for "consider the ravens," is trying to modern nerves; and so is "the pardicioner of her nappeth (slumbereth) not;" and "Pounce Pilat;" and "whist" for "hold thy peace;" and "be sly (wise) as serpents." Idols he generally renders "mawmets" (mammoth is the modern form)—that is, Mahmonets, a strange survival from the Crusaders, when those who, of all men, are most fanatical for the unity of God were confounded with image worshippers. Wyclif's two editions, carried about by his itinerants, and studied by Lollards—"noisy babblers," the word means in Flemish—were all England had for nearly one hundred and fifty years.

Then Tyndale, a Gloucestershire man, trained first at Oxford and then at Cambridge, put forth his version, 1526. How bitter Tyndale was. He wrote: "The parson sheareth, the vicar shaveth, the parish priest polleth, the friar senfeth, and the pardoner pareth. We lack but a butcher to pull of the skin;" not foreseeing that for every penny the Church took or wheedled out of men's pockets, the "new men," who were waiting like vultures for the spoil of the monasteries, and egging on men like Tyndale to inflame the people against them, would take twelve at last. How Tyndale had to make his translation abroad; and how, to his everlasting shame—he has other things as shameful to answer for—Henry the Eighth had him dogged in the streets of Antwerp, by two English traitors, and handed over to the Emperor's officers to be hustled out of the city and burnt at Vilvoord, can be read in the histories.

Tyndale's version, less archaic than Wyclif's, has still plenty of quaint old words. "Gather up the gobbetes that remain." "Yer" (ere, before) is common. To rob is to "pill;" "gentle is "soft." Of course he was nothing if not controversial; and the use of "grace," where "favour" would so often be more natural, is due to him. "Church" he will have none of.

He even renders, "Thou art Peter, and on this congregation will I build my church." "Confess" he wholly eschews; and yet for "the preparation" (Matthew xxvii. 62) he gives "Good Friday." There is a note of pathos in "that lost child" for Judas, instead of "the son of perdition." Servants are not to be "pickers"; and Christ, sitting among the doctors, "both heareth and poseth them." Many of his renderings are wanting in literalness—rather emphatic paraphrases than translations.

After Tyndale came Coverdale, 1535. His second edition is called the "Great Bible;" and within a year of it (1540) appeared Cranmer's Authorised Revision. All these are indiscriminately called "The Treacle Bible," because, instead of, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" they give "treacle," the "theriack" or Venice remedy against vipers' bites. They, and Matthew's, and Taverner's, and contemporary versions are also called "Bug Bible," because they give, "Thou shalt not be afraid of any bugges by night" (bugbears). He is much less Protestant than Tyndale, using "penance" several times for "repentance." Of his archaisms, one explains the title "Round-head"—"Absalom rounded his head once a year." Coverdale's "Great Bible" was ordered to be set up in churches for every man to read. In Saint Paul's there were no less than six copies. An attempt was made early in Edward the Sixth's reign by Sir John Clarke to put the Bible into simple language, though not to give that ornate and telegraphese kind of version which the American revisers are said to have wished for. Centurions he called "hundreders," publicans "totters," proselytes "freshmen," crucified "crossed," and lunatic "moonied." Yet he could not resist the classicality of the age, and calls locusts "acrids," and spirits "phantasma." With the Geneva Bible, 1560, came in chapters and verses. It is wrongly called "The Breeches Bible," for Wyclif long before had given "breechia" for the aprons of fig-leaves. The Bishop's Bible, 1568, is full of "padding" and mouth-filling words. Its notes—for all these older versions have notes—are far less racy than those of its predecessors, though it does assert that "the Pope is the successor not of Simon Peter, but of Simon Magus." It could not, for instance, return the Geneva note, Revelations ix. 3, "These locusts out of the bottomless pit are worldly Prelates, with Archbishops, Bishops, etc."

The Douay Bible, 1609, was professedly hard on the Vulgate, and often retained "the old vulgar approved Latin for fear of undoing or restraining the sense of the Holy Ghost to our phantasy." Hence we read, "Elias was a man like unto us passible," "Give us to-day our supersubstantial bread;" "loaves of proposition" (shew-bread). And so we come to the Authorised Version of 1611, which, save that the Psalms for the month are from Cranmer's Bible, has superseded older translations even in the Prayer Book. Till quite lately, however, no two editions were wholly identical. In some the misprints were startling. There is the well-known edition of 1631, in which the "not" was left out from one of the Commandments, an omission for which the printer was fined three hundred pounds. Others have "vinegar" for vineyard; "covereth" for converteth a sinner; while, till the revision, the words "strain at a gnat," instead of Tyndale's "strain out," made a difficulty where none exists.

Bible-printing was a monopoly. In Scotland, from 1676, for more than forty years it was enjoyed by Mrs. Anderson, whose books are the most incorrect that ever came from any press. Look at Dobson's "Bassandyne Bible," and you will see how long-suffering a Scot must have been who could read a chapter of the muddle that Mrs. Anderson made of Holy Writ. "Why should it be, though tathing incredible?"—when a book is printed that way, one feels sure that, to save the bawbees, the good lady must have employed children to set up her type. The next Scotch monopolist, Sir David Hunter Blair, was a vast improvement; but he makes one notable error: in Luke xi. 29 he omits the "not"—"forbid to take thy coat also."

It must not be supposed that a happy rendering—and our Bible has so many—came all at once. It is generally—as Dr. Edgar, in his "Plain Account for Plain People," expresses it—"the result of long whittling." Thus, Tyndale's "maintainer" at last becomes "ringleader;" and his "behold a right Israelite," "an Israelite indeed." The Authorised Version had scarcely appeared when it was bitterly attacked on the principle on which Clarke had attacked the "Great Bible." Even Selden complained of its un-English phrases, not to be understood by common folk. If the Long Parliament had been yet longer it would have been revised.

Dr. Doddridge's attempt was not a happy one: "Superior authorities, for 'higher powers;'" "partook of their refreshment," for "did eat their meat;" "pure and unmingled," for "pure milk of the word."

The Scot, M'Knight, in 1798, erred in the opposite direction. For "corrupt communication" he puts "rotten speech;" for "cleave unto his wife," "he shall be glued unto."

Another Scot, Thomson of Ochiltree, essayed a version in 1816. For "let Paul down in a basket," he gives "suspended;" for "faith is the substance of things hoped for," etc., he gives, "a realising of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." "Holy ornature" seems a poor exchange for "sanctuary," in Hebrews ix. 1; but some people like these things. It is as good as Bloomfield's "sacred furniture."

Scotland has produced several translators, who, like Clerke, wished to harmonise the Bible language with that of daily life. The result is quaint. Saint Matthew, published by way of experiment in 1862, is made of stuff like this: "Ai' there was a guid way aff frae them a hirael o' mony swine feeding." And what can we think of Dr. Waddell's Psalms, published ten years later: "My God, I hae skreight the lee lang day, but ye mind me nane;" and "Droves o' nowt hae rinket me roun; stoor stirks o' Bashan hae fankit me about."

And so we come to the Revisers, who have at least the merit of standing firmly against the American modernisations. To have altered Jacob's "ladder" into a "staircase," would have been as bad as to change the man and woman of the wedding service into "male person" and "female."

CURIOS OF DUELLING.

THE advantages of living in the latter half of the nineteenth century are many and various; but none is more to be prized than the fact that the face of society is now as sternly set against duelling as it looked with favour upon the barbarous custom in days which are within the memory of many living men. We can hardly realise now, that fifty years ago a Major in the British Army was killed in a duel which arose in a simple dispute about what was trumps at a game of cards; but such was the case.

Men have lost their lives in duels about

dogs, geese, or such an absurdly trivial cause as a bottle of anchovies. Duels have originated in one man asking another to pass him a glass at dinner, or to give him a pinch of snuff. It is even recorded that a British officer maimed a lieutenant in the American army for life, in a duel which was the result of a dispute as to the proper way in which to eat an ear of corn.

There is no record of a private duel having been fought in this country before the time of James the First. Duels became usual in the reign of that monarch, and grew in favour during the years in which the two Charles occupied the throne. They were most common in England in the dissolute days of Charles the Second. It was then customary for seconds to fight as well as their principals, and, as they were always chosen for their adroitness, their combats were usually the more fatal.

Duels were prevalent in France for fully a century before they became introduced on this side of the Channel. Hallam attributes their rise to the barbarous custom of wearing a sword as part of the private dress of a gentleman of fashion, which was introduced at the end of the fifteenth century. The height that this vice attained in France is shown by the statement of Fortenoy Mareuil, who says, in his "Mémoires," that two thousand men of noble birth fell in duels between 1601 and 1619.

Edicts against duels were published; but with little effect. Men fought in the public streets and in private rooms; by day and night; by moonlight and torchlight; and it was not until Richelieu made a terrible example of the Count de Bouteville—a noted duellist, who had been in twenty-two encounters—that anything was done to stop them. Bouteville and his second, the Count de Chappelles, were beheaded, in spite of the efforts of their noble friends; and their fate acted as a deterrent on would-be duellists for some years.

After the effect of this salutary example had worn off a little, and duels began again to become fashionable, a further check was imposed upon them by two combatants being, at the Cardinal's orders, stripped and hung from a gallows head downwards, in the sight of all people.

On Richelieu's death the habit broke out again with renewed violence, and continued to be more or less prevalent until the Revolution put a stop to it for a time.

A list of duels fought in France during

the last sixty years, includes the names of such well-known men as Emile de Girardin, Armand Carrel, Lamartine, Alexandre Dumas, Ledru Rollin, Edmond About, Sainte-Beuve, and Monsieur Thiers; while the recent meeting between General Boulanger and Monsieur Floquet shows that Frenchmen of every class still regard the duel as the legitimate way in which to settle disputes. The best feature of this survival of the manners of a barbarous age is, that though during the last twenty years there have been nearly a thousand duels in France, in ninety-eight per cent. of the cases the combatants left the field unscathed, though the demands of honour were declared to be satisfied. So it seems that Mark Twain's delightful parody of a French duel has a good deal of truth in it.

One of the most extraordinary duels ever fought took place in 1808 between two Frenchmen. Of course the quarrel rose about a lady—a certain Mademoiselle Tirevet—who, it appears, was unable to decide which of the two she preferred, and who found a way out of the difficulty by promising to marry whichever of them worsted the other. The ardent lovers agreed to postpone the matter for a month that they might have time to think it over in a calm and judicial spirit; and, at the end of that time, decided to fight in the air. Two balloons were made exactly alike; and, upon the appointed day, each soared aloft, accompanied by his second, and armed with a blunderbuss; the agreement being that they were to fire not upon one another, but upon the balloons. They rose half a mile, and then the preconcerted signal was given. One of the opponents fired and missed; the other followed suit with more disastrous effect. He hit his opponent's balloon, which instantly collapsed, with the result that the occupants of the car were dashed to the earth with frightful rapidity and killed on the spot.

A duel, which occasioned a great sensation at the time of its occurrence was one between Henri Delagrave and Alphonse Rivière; the cause being the success of the former in wooing a young lady to whom they were both attached. Rivière insulted his successful rival by slapping him on the cheek in a gaming-saloon, and it was agreed that a duel should take place in which the life of one should be ended. The details were left to their seconds to arrange; and, until they faced one another upon the field, neither of the young men

knew in what form they were to brave death. On the following morning four men met in a quiet wood. They were Rivière, with Monsieur Savalle, his second, and Delagrave, who was accompanied by a doctor named Rocquet. The latter informed the rivals that Monsieur Savalle and himself had arrived at the decision that, in order to secure the certainty of a fatal result to one of their principals, it would be best to leave out of the question swords or pistols, and to trust to the more sure action of a deadly poison. As he spoke he drew from his pocket a little box, in which lay four black pellets all exactly identical in size and shape.

"In one of these," he said, "I have placed a sufficient quantity of prussic acid to cause the almost instantaneous death of any one who swallows it. Monsieur Savalle and I will decide by the toss of a coin which of you is to have first choice, and you shall alternately draw and swallow a pill until the poison shows its effects."

While speaking the last words, the doctor spun into the air a glittering gold piece, and, as it fell, Savalle cried "Tails." It fell with the head uppermost, and Savalle said:

"The first choice is yours, Monsieur Delagrave."

The two whose fate was contained in those innocent-looking black balls had shown no sign of trepidation while the doctor explained the awful preparations that he had made for the death of one of them; and Delagrave's face was perfectly impassive as he selected and washed down with a glass of claret one of the globules.

"And now Monsieur Rivière," said the doctor.

Rivière extended his hand and took a pill, which he swallowed with as little appearance of concern as his opponent. A minute passed, two, three, and still the duellists stood motionless.

"It is your choice again, Monsieur Delagrave," said the doctor; "but this time you must swallow the pill at the same instant that Monsieur Rivière swallows the one you leave for him."

Delagrave paused for a moment, looking in silence at the two balls that lay before him. The closest scrutiny showed not the slightest difference between them; one was harmless, but in the other rested the pall of eternity—the silence and peace of that sleep which knows no awakening in this world. With a start, he drew his eyes

from the box, and, putting his finger and thumb into it, drew forth one of the remaining pills. Rivière took the solitary one remaining, and both men simultaneously gulped down their fate. A few seconds passed without any perceptible movement on the part of either of them, and then Rivière threw up his hands, and, without a sound, fell flat upon the grass. He turned half round, gave one convulsive shudder, and, as his rival bent over him, breathed his last. The fair cause of this awful tragedy was so horrified at it, that she refused to see Delagrave again; and the memory of those few minutes weighed so heavily upon him, that he followed Rivière to the grave in a few months' time.

Of a similar nature was a duel which took place between a young Englishman and a noted French duellist—a man who had killed several adversaries, and was considered the most deadly shot of his day. Every morning he devoted a couple of hours to shooting at small plaster-of-Paris figures, and such was his skill, that he was able to make almost a certainty of hitting them at a distance of fifty paces. The Englishman expressed his entire willingness to meet this formidable adversary, but not on the usual terms. "I have no fancy," he said, "for placing myself before the pistol of a man whose aim is as sure as mine is erratic; and the only conditions on which I will consent to the meeting, are that we choose between two pistols, one only of which is loaded, and, standing within two paces of one another, fire simultaneously."

The Frenchman consented with perfect coolness to this proposal, and the meeting took place on these terms. Two pistols were brought out, and the seconds of the combatants tossed up for choice of weapons. The selection fell to the Frenchman—Villeneuve. He balanced the weapons separately in his hands, endeavouring to discriminate between the weight of the one which contained the bullet, and the one which was charged with powder only. He fixed upon the one he thought was the heavier, and the other was given to Talbot, his antagonist. They took up their positions so close to one another, that the muzzle of each man's pistol touched his adversary. The seconds advanced. Talbot wrung the hand of his friend with a faint smile, while Villeneuve nodded carelessly to those among the bystanders whom he knew. The word was given, and the two

pistols went off at the same instant. Both men fell. Talbot rose almost immediately, but Villeneuve lay still, having met the fate of most professed duellists. Talbot's face was scorched by the explosion of the gunpowder; but he escaped the death that would undoubtedly have been his, had the meeting taken place in an ordinary way.

Several remarkable duels have been fought in the dark. In 1800, Isaac Corry and Henry Grattan engaged in a fierce debate, which culminated in Corry saying that Grattan, instead of addressing him, should, if he had his deserts, be standing at a felon's bar.

Grattan's reply to this insult concluded with the following words: "The gentleman has calumniated me to-night in Parliament; he will calumniate me to-morrow in the King's courts. But had he said, or dared to have insinuated one half as much elsewhere, the indignant spirit of an honest man would have answered this vile and venal slander with a blow."

The two left the House immediately, with friends, and, although it was pitch dark, a meeting was arranged there and then, and at the first shot Corry's left arm was shattered.

As recently as 1853, Lieutenant Sheppard, stationed at Bombay, offended Captain Phillips, of his own regiment. A violent dispute arose, which ended in their exchanging shots by the light of a candle, held by a servant of one of them. Captain Phillips fell mortally wounded. His opponent was tried by court-martial, dismissed the army, and afterwards found guilty of manslaughter by a civil court.

One night, at Cassala, Signor Rossi was playing Hamlet, and was interrupted, time after time, by the loud talking and laughing of a body of young Italians. Finally, he stopped in the middle of a speech, and, walking to the foot-lights, said: "I will continue when you will allow me." The chattering stopped, and he was able to proceed with his part; but, at the conclusion of the play, the box-keeper handed him a challenge from one of the young men to whom he had spoken. The actor did not wish to appear afraid; but it was absolutely imperative that he should leave Cassala early the next morning, as he had to give a performance at Milan. He went to the address of the challenger and explained matters to him, adding: "If you will dispense with the formality of seconds, and will accompany me to my hotel, I

have a big room in which we can settle our little difference in time for me to get away to Milan, if you allow me."

The proposal was agreed to, and they repaired at once to Rossi's hotel. But they were not allowed to fight their duel in peace, for the landlord came to the door and begged to be allowed to enter. He had heard of the challenge, and seeing Rossi return with a stranger, his suspicions were aroused. It was all in vain that Rossi told him his visitor had gone. Nothing would satisfy him unless he could see the light extinguished.

"We must humour him," whispered Rossi. "It will be easy to take aim by the sparks of our cigarettes."

So the light was put out, and the landlord went away, only, however, to hear in a few minutes two loud reports, and to find his fears confirmed on rushing back again. Rossi stood uninjured; and his antagonist lay with a shattered shoulder-blade.

Lord Byron, uncle of the poet, killed a Mr. Chatworth in a duel which was fought practically in the dark in 1765. There was some suspicion of foul play, and Lord Byron was tried for manslaughter before his peers, but was dismissed on payment of the fees.

The nephew of this man, Lord Byron, the poet, was much galled by severe strictures passed by Southey upon his character and writings, and announced his intentions of demanding "the satisfaction due to a gentleman." For some reason the challenge was never sent; but in anticipation of it the Laureate prepared the following reply, which was found among his papers:

"SIR,—I have the honour of acknowledging the receipt of your letter, and do myself the pleasure of replying to it without delay. In affairs of this kind the partners ought to meet upon equal terms. But to establish the equality between you and me, there are three things which ought to be done, and then a fourth also becomes necessary before I can meet you on the field:

"First.—You must marry and have four children. Please be particular in having them all girls.

"Secondly.—You must prove that the greater part of the provision which you make for them depends upon your life; and you must be under a bond of four thousand pounds not to be hanged, not to

commit suicide, and not to be killed in a duel — which are the conditions upon which I have effected an insurance of my own life for the benefit of my wife and daughters.

"Thirdly.—I must tell three direct falsehoods concerning you upon the hustings, or in some other not less public assembly; and I shall neither be able to do this, nor to meet you afterwards in the manner you propose, unless you can perform the fourth thing, which is, that you must convert me from the Christian religion.

"Till all this be accomplished, our dispute must be carried on without the use of any more iron than is necessary for blackening our ink and mending our pens; or any more lead than enters into the composition of the 'Edinburgh Review.'

"I have the honour to subscribe myself, sir, yours, with all proper consideration,
"ROBERT SOUTHEY."

In the last century Europe nearly beheld the edifying spectacle of a duel between two of the most powerful monarchs of the day. A quarrel arose between George the Third of England and Frederick of Prussia about negotiations for a double marriage which it was proposed should take place between their houses. The angry feeling engendered was increased by a quarrel about Mecklenburg, and after a violently abusive and very unbecoming correspondence, the two monarchs came to the resolution of settling their differences by a personal meeting. King George chose Brigadier-General Sulton as his second, and Frederick selected Colonel Dersheim to accompany him. The territory of Hildesheim was fixed upon for the place of meeting, the King of England being at this time at Hanover, while the Prussian monarch was at Saltzdahl, near Brunswick. The meeting was averted by the Prussian Minister to the Court of St. James, who, having been dismissed thence, in a very abrupt manner, repaired to his Royal master.

At first he feigned to encourage him in his purpose, but he managed to persuade Frederick to delay the sending of the challenge for a fortnight by pointing out to him that his health was far from good just then, and that a collapse just before the meeting would place him in a very false position.

The delay enabled the ministers on both sides to negotiate, with the result that the quarrel was made up.

Duelling received its death-blow in

England by a fatal encounter which took place on the first of July, 1843.

Two officers, Colonel Fawcett and Lieutenant Munro, who were brothers-in-law, had a quarrel. Colonel Fawcett was elderly; had been in India; was out of health; and exceedingly irritable in temper. It came out afterwards that he had given his relation the greatest provocation. Still, Lieutenant Munro hung back from what, up to that time, had been regarded as the sole resource of a gentleman, especially a military man.

He showed great reluctance to challenge Colonel Fawcett; and it was only after the impression—mistaken or otherwise—was given to the insulted man, that his regiment expected him to take the old course, and that if he did not do so he must be disgraced throughout the Service, that he called out his brother-in-law. The challenge was accepted; the meeting took place; Colonel Fawcett was shot dead; and the horrible anomaly presented itself of two sisters—the one rendered a widow by the hand of her brother-in-law; and a family of children clad in mourning for their uncle, whom their father had slain. Apart from the bloodshed, Lieutenant Munro was ruined by the miserable step on which he had been thrust.

Public feeling was roused to protest against the barbarous practice, by which a bully had it in his power to risk the life of a man immeasurably his superior, against whom he happened to have a dislike. Prince Albert interested himself deeply in the question, especially as it concerned the army.

Various expedients were suggested; eventually an amendment was inserted into the Articles of War, which was founded on the more reasonable, humane, and Christian conclusion that to offer an apology, or even to make reparation when wrong had been committed, was more becoming the character of an officer and gentleman, than to furnish the alternative of standing up to kill or to be killed for a hasty word or a rash act.

A TERRIBLE COINCIDENCE.

A STORY IN EIGHT CHAPTERS.

By ADA L. HARRIS.

CHAPTER V.

THE longer I remained at Woodburn Hall, the more I became convinced of the fact that Mrs. Wild was but a mere puppet,

and that her husband pulled the wires. I also discovered that, previous to her marriage with him, he had been a music-master in rather poor circumstances, so that whatever money there was belonged to her; and thus, one of my earliest surmises was proved correct. It was remarkable what a mere look from him could accomplish! I have spoken before of the influence his playing had upon his wife. Well, it was not very long before I began to experience some of its effects myself. It was one evening at dusk that, as I sat by the window of the school-room, gazing out at the dreary prospect of trees shut in by a high wall, there came floating through the house the wonderful strains of "The Moonlight Sonata." It was nearly dark, and as I listened idly to the melodious sounds they seemed gradually to hover round me, and draw me irresistibly towards their source. It might have been only the spell of the music, falling upon me just at the mysterious hour of twilight, that drew me there; but five minutes later I was sitting on the step outside the drawing-room door, with my ear near the key-hole, drinking in the witching sounds produced by the conjunction of a stout, sandy-haired man, and an Erard grand piano. Martha Horrocks happened to pass me as I sat there, and threw up her hands in what seemed almost more like horror than surprise at my situation. "Lord preserve us!" I heard her mutter to herself, "she's took the same way!" What could she mean, the foolish woman, by that remark? Suddenly the music stopped in the middle of a bar, and, before I could change my position, the door opened, and Mr. Wild appeared on the threshold. I started up in great confusion, and apologised incoherently for the way in which I had ventured to gratify my artistic senses; in fact, I declared by way of explanation, that I had been drawn there, whether I would or not.

There was a light in the room behind him, and as he stood in the doorway I saw a slow, sinister smile steal round the corners of his mouth, and spread from there to his eyes, which glittered under his half-closed lids with a look of intense, malicious gratification. So, at least, I described it to myself; but then I was prejudiced against him. And as I returned to my quarters in the school-room, I resolved that the next time I felt tempted to act in a similar way, I would stuff my fingers into my ears, rather than yield to the

temptation, and pamper the vanity of a man for whom, for various indescribable reasons, I entertained a hearty dislike.

And I kept this my resolve, and whenever I heard the sounds which exercised such a potent fascination over me echoing through the house at dusk, I either tied a shawl over my head to deaden the sound, or, if the weather permitted, put on my hat and fled into the garden. Sometimes I fancied that I heard the drawing-room door open and shut softly. Was it to see if there was a spell-bound listener crouched outside it? And, if so, was he disappointed to find there was none? I fancy so; and also about this time, I more than once, when sitting in the school-room, either engaged in teaching my refractory pupil the elements of knowledge, or employed in some occupation of my own, felt a strange sensation, almost amounting to a shudder, combined with a dislike to look behind me; and when I conquered the feeling, and cast a hasty glance round, I caught a glimpse of a tall stout figure, clad in light grey clothes, just turning away from the window, or the half-opened door. Altogether, what with these strange fancies, and the air of mystery that hung over this depressing house, I was becoming nervous to a degree, and inclined to see significance in the merest trifles; to start when Florence's slate-pencil squeaked upon the slate, and turn pale when the wind howled round the house like a banshee, bewailing the evil to come. This present situation of mine was certainly proving by far the most interesting of any I had ever held; but the interest was of the uncanny, creepy description, which made me pull the clothes over my head when I woke at night, with the fear lest I should hear something—what, I didn't know; but the feeling grew upon me, and towards the latter part of my residence at Woodburn Hall, I had a premonition that there was a climax of some sort approaching. Certainly there was something so very strange in the demeanour of Mrs. Wild at times, as almost to denote insanity; though, at present, in a mild form. Was this the key to the puzzle, and the reason why we lived in a large house, with only one servant to wait upon us, and why no visitor ever entered the doors? Did that account for the look of half disgust and half—something else which I saw in Mr. Wild's eyes when they rested on his wife's pale face and shrinking form, as she sat opposite to him? For on Sundays, when

they dined early, my pupil and I partook of the meal with them; a privilege I would rather have been spared, as Mrs. Wild had a nervous way of playing with the knives, while her husband watched her incessantly, like a cat does a mouse, under his half-closed eye-lids, in a manner that used so to affect my nerves that sometimes I felt as though I must scream aloud; and it was an intense relief when Florence upset the contents of her plate or deluged herself with gravy by way of interlude. We were waited on, while at table, by the angular handmaid who combined so many and various offices in her one spare person. I often used to find her staring at me absently, when she ought to have been handing the vegetables; and several times, when I passed her on the stairs, or about the house, she seemed to me to be on the point of telling me something. She would look at me curiously, open her mouth, then apparently change her mind, or think better of it, and pass on.

Two or three Sundays elapsed before I again took my pupil to church—the weather was bad, or something, and I compromised matters by telling her Bible stories at home. Daniel in the den of lions was a favourite, in consequence of her having once seen a circus; and Daniel, in her mind, was always pictured cracking a whip and wearing tight trousers with a gilt stripe down each leg. I attempted to combat this idea in vain; and also another, which was, that the Children of Israel travelled in caravans and sold mops and brooms.

However, on this, our second appearance at the church in the village—warned by my previous experience—I insisted, before starting, on a thorough investigation of my charge's pockets, with the intention of confiscating all contraband and unseemly articles. I was rewarded by the discovery of three cigar stumps, a broken boot-lace, and the handle of the school-room door. Consequently, the service passed pretty smoothly and without any particular difficulty, until within about ten minutes of its conclusion. The clergyman had got well on with his "lastly," and I was inwardly congratulating myself that, not for another week, at least, should I be required to pass a similarly anxious period, and, at the same time, admiring the classic profile of "old Dr. Green's assistant," who also happened to be attending church again that morning, when there was a crash, and Florence fell right off her seat, bounded

against the door of the pew, burst it open, and rolled out into the aisle—all in the space of a couple of seconds. I precipitated myself after her.

"Are you hurt? You bad girl! Don't cry!" I uttered frantically, at the same time endeavouring to lift her up and carry her into the porch before the tremendous howl which I saw coming had time to culminate.

Just then, I heard a gentleman's voice saying, "Allow me," and, almost before I could look round, Dr. Green's assistant had picked her up and borne her kicking and struggling into the vestibule, where he stifled her cries by the prompt administration of an acid-drop. Having ascertained that there were no bones broken and no damage done, beyond an incipient bump on her forehead and a possible black eye to follow, he volunteered to carry her home, which offer the patient received with acclamations, and, as it was no great distance, I was forced to accede to it.

We parted at the gate of the Hall, he promising to send up a lotion to be applied to the injured parts, and I acknowledging in my own heart that "a man was a man for a' that," though in the eyes of the world he might be only "old Dr. Green's assistant."

CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE and dreadful thing happened that same evening. I had seen Florence—whose head had pained her considerably—put to bed, and had responded to the fretful demand for a fairy-tale before she went to sleep; compounding with my conscience by giving a highly-coloured and sensational account of the adventures of Joseph and his brethren, which Joseph himself would scarcely have recognised.

It was generally understood that I passed Sunday evening in the drawing-room, either with a book or exchanging polite commonplaces with my employers. Occasionally we had some music, to which I felt I could listen demurely, behind the shelter of my magazine, without infringing on my firm resolution not to yield myself again to its magnetic influence, and, in the well-lighted room, with the curtains drawn and the fire blazing on the hearth—for we were still only in November—the strains lost most of the attraction which they had possessed for me, when I heard them as I sat in the twilight in the lonely school-room. But this evening I felt unac-

countably sleepy, and the music had upon me almost the effect of a soporific.

I lazily turned over in my own mind the events of the day, and a smile relaxed the corners of my mouth as I recalled the accident of the morning, and the prompt and welcome assistance which had been afforded by "Dr. Green's assistant," who, it appeared, had attended the child before, when suffering from an attack of the measles, and was, consequently, in some degree acquainted with the strange household. I wonder what he thought of it? I should like to have his opinion on Mrs. Wild. I wonder——

The melting strains of one of Mendelssohn's "Lieder" seemed to come sweetly and faintly as from a distance. My head fell back, and—— What was it that suddenly recalled me from a condition of semi-oblivion to one of alertness and anticipation? Was anything happening or about to happen? The music had stopped, and the musician was sitting motionless before the instrument, with his hands still resting on the keys. He was gazing steadfastly at his wife, who had risen from her seat and was standing on the hearth-rug in front of the fire. She had on a dress of black silk, draped with grenadine or some other thin, gauzy material, and in one hand she held a strip of folded paper. I saw his eyes—which were nearly always hidden beneath their lids—open to their widest extent and fix themselves upon her as she stood there, seemingly fascinated under his gaze.

At the same time I felt conscious of a certain vague and awful power in those sinister orbs, and a dread lest they should be turned on me; but my presence seemed to be either forgotten or unheeded by both. Then I saw her give a slight convulsive shiver, while, with her right hand, she inserted the strip of paper between the bars of the grate, where it caught fire.

What was she going to do? Good heavens! The lighted paper was brought near to those gauzy draperies—nearer still. In another second they were in a blaze! I gave a loud cry as I saw the tongue of flame shoot up, and throwing off my lethargy, sprang forward. At the same moment Mr. Wild relaxed his fixed stare, and, catching up a fur rug which lay in front of the piano, in a second had thrown it round his wife, pressing it down with his hands, while I, taking the cue from him, heaped upon her every available piece of drapery or loose article that lay at hand,

and the fire, thus promptly attacked, was soon subdued.

"Were you mad, Laura?" he whispered, hoarsely, to the woman, who had made not the slightest effort to save herself from a horrible death, but stood motionless, as though carved out of stone, through the bustle and confusion which ensued. "What possessed you to——"

She gave him a look—a look of mingled horror and contempt, and the words died away on his lips. As for me, I was in a condition of fright and bewilderment beyond all power of words to describe. What was the meaning of that extraordinary scene I had just witnessed, and why had the man passively allowed his wife to set light to her own garments, and put her life in jeopardy, without stirring hand or foot, or uttering a word to prevent the catastrophe? For it was not until he heard my shriek that—— My head was going round and round, and I felt more like fainting than I had ever done before in my life—only just then I caught sight of a terrible burn on her arm above the wrist, which I knew must be causing her agony, though apparently she felt nothing, and still preserved her stony calm.

"Oh!" I cried. "Won't some one go for the doctor? Look here at this dreadful burn!"

He cast his eyes in the direction of the injury, with a look of what was curiously like disappointment, as though—but surely I must be out of my mind, as well as the unhappy woman who stood there, staring vacantly before her.

"I will send Martha here," after a few seconds' pause, during which he seemed to be thinking deeply, "and go for him myself." And he left the room.

"Oh, Mrs. Wild!" I cried, hysterically, as the door closed on him. "How could you do such a thing? How could you be so mad?"

The word seemed to strike upon her ear and disturb the torpor which had taken possession of her.

"Mad!" she repeated after me. "That is what they all think. That is what he wants them to think!" Then, turning to me: "Do you think I'm mad, too?"

What could I say but "No, no!" and beg her to be calm until the doctor came to dress her arm? But she would not, and, touching the charred remnants of her dress, asked almost fiercely:

"Do you think I did this of my own will? Don't you know he hates me, and——"

What other terrible revelation she might have made I do not know, for just then Martha Horrocks entered the room, to whom I thought it incumbent upon me to explain that her mistress had met with an accident. An accident! What else could I call it? She received my explanation grimly.

"An accident!" she remarked, looking from one to the other. "How many more of 'em, I wonder? And why do they always happen when he's by?" There was an emphasis upon the pronoun, which implied no little suspicion of the individual thus referred to. "There was that bottle o' laudanum she took by mistake not more'n three months ago—through being left handy a' purpose on the mantelshelf—and now here's another!"

I ventured to mention, by way of propitiation, that Mr. Wild had gone for the doctor; but the only reply she vouchsafed was a snort of mingled contempt and defiance; then, seizing upon her mistress, who had uttered no word during our colloquy, nor seemed to heed what was passing round her, she bore her off to await his arrival, and he again proved to be no other than "Dr. Green's assistant."

For two or three days she was confined to her room, and tended by her faithful, but unprepossessing abigail, whose plain-spoken suspicions, added to my own unspeakable thoughts, were almost more than I could endure.

What was the mystery, the dark and terrible mystery which hung like a pall over Woodburn Hall and its inmates? Was the lady mad, and, if so, how was it that her husband imposed no restraint upon her actions, but deliberately allowed her to imperil her own life? And what did Martha mean by that reference to the bottle of laudanum?

It was after his third visit that I met Dr. Howard—by which name I now knew him—leaving the sick-room. He stopped, and shook hands, and enquired after Florence, who, in consequence of her own black eye—of which she was inordinately proud—and my own unsettled state of mind, was leading a life of freedom from study, and indulging in every kind of lawlessness possible. I had that morning been compelled to read the Riot Act in consequence of her flagrant disregard of the feelings of the family cat, manifested by affixing a clothes-peg to his tail in such a

manner as to cause the enraged and insulted animal to run amuck among the china, and demolish an entire row of flower-pots in the conservatory in his endeavours to rid himself of the appendage.

But to return to the Doctor, who gave me a favourable account of his patient, but, at the same time, remarked that I looked far from well myself.

I confessed that what had happened had upset me considerably; that I could neither sleep by night nor rest by day; that my appetite was gone; and the least thing sent me into a paroxysm of nervous terror.

He looked grave, as I continued, and said he would send me a tonic and a sleeping draught, if I was unable to procure sleep by natural means, and again remarked that there was no need for any further anxiety on behalf of Mrs. Wild, as she was doing well and might come downstairs to-morrow if she chose. At the same time, he added that he could not quite comprehend how the accident had occurred. Could I enlighten him?

I told him what I had seen—how the unhappy lady had applied the light to her own garments, and how—sinking my voice to a whisper, and looking nervously round me—her husband had most unaccountably refrained from interfering until her dress was in a blaze.

He looked graver and graver as I continued; but only said that perhaps I was mistaken. At least he hoped so.

Then I also asked him in my turn what Martha Horrocks had meant by the allusion to the bottle of laudanum, and he told me that some months ago Mrs. Wild had taken by mistake a large dose of laudanum, which had been supplied to her husband for some medicinal purpose, and, unfortunately, left standing about. Luckily, he added, the dose had not been sufficient to prove fatal, though the consequences might have been serious had not remedies been administered promptly.

There was a sudden draught of cold air from an open window, or something, which made me shudder at these words, and at the same time the Doctor, dropping my hand—which he had been holding professionally—and addressing some one behind me, said:

"I am happy to find my patient much improved to-day."

And, turning round, I saw the now-familiar, stout, commonplace figure of the man I was beginning to fear as well as hate.